

# *The Doctor Arrives*

JOHN GREY

The doctor enters the room  
and the mood is no less gloomier.  
His demeanor is more undertaker than healer,  
as if medicine died on the way here  
and the corpse is coffined in  
his old brown leather bag.  
Soon the priest will come, toting dead prayer.  
And then the family, friends,  
with the cold, damp bodies of their tears,  
their wretched tongue cadavers.  
Still, the doctor kneels beside her bed,  
attempts to soothe, for curing is beyond him.  
He doesn't poke or prod or even touch,  
merely stares down at the trembling edge  
of flesh and ghost, raises the white flag  
for his pills and potions.  
Before he leaves, he gives her something for pain.  
But it is his departure that she swallows.